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is no force that controls other forces; there is nothing that gives measure or appoints a destination. The forces simply interact, and the destination is just everywhere at once, or nowhere. Not being able to discriminate forces, by their nature or by their behavior, as material or spiritual, as controlling or controlled, Adams simply abstracts from them all. He produces a conception of life that is not so much physical and materialistic as mathematical, and hence avowedly relative.

There is always the danger, of course, that a mathematical conception may prove to be the most unreal thing in the universe. Can we safely abandon our minds to pure relativity—without even building a Positivist iron fence around our little acre of dead truths?

Just at present the intuition of the common man—not the creed of the common man, nor the vision of the uncommon man—appears to be busily engaged in setting a bound to mathematical complexity, in giving measure to evolution, in establishing a fundamental law based not on a theory of government but upon public opinion as something deep, much overlaid indeed by the shifting sands of thought, but finally solid. Men have died in unprecedented numbers for the simplest faith that ever men fought for. Catholic, Protestant, Socialist, free-thinker, poet, man of affairs, have all found that their agreement on the need of resistance to evil makes them kin. They have asserted that there is a *constant* in evolution; they have affirmed their belief in a God of Measure as against the German God of a measureless and confused expansion in which morality and immorality, spirit and matter spread outward in indistinguishable combustion with the force of a solar explosion.

By a kind of irony, just at this greatest moment in history, appears this prodigy of a book—an unequaled analysis of the period just past, a terribly clear formulation of the need for intellectual clearness, a warning against moral enthusiasms.

THE ECONOMICS OF PROGRESS. By the Right Honorable J. M. Robertson, M.P. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1918.

To one not familiar with the violent disagreement that has long existed, among those who ought to know, as to what political economy is or ought to be, it may seem that nothing but delight in the discovery of a rich, copious, many-sided theme of argument could account for the ingenious chapter on "The Aim and Use of Economic Science" with which that able writer and skilled parliamentarian, the Right Honorable J. M. Robertson begins his book, *The Economics of Progress*. Mr. Robertson plunges into the thick of the fray and deals blows here and there with an adroitness and an impartiality that win instant admiration. The average moderately cultivated reader is no more able to resist his eloquence than were the cultured and respectable members of the Amphyctionic Council capable of withstanding the eloquence of Aeschines. One feels inspired to go out at once, with pickaxe and crowbar, to remove whatever buildings sacrilegious hands have raised upon the sacred field of the economic Cirrha.

Gradually it dawns upon the reader that the platform to which he has given his adhesion almost from the start is essentially a plea for Ricardi, Malthus, and common sense.

Economic science is essentially what Ricardi saw it to be, though its "laws" are simply formulations of *average* tendency. Nor is the "economic man" a mere delusion. "The 'economic man' is not an abstract prodigy of selfishness, but the normal economic man of commerce, who is honest and law-abiding and likes to be on good terms with his customers." His pursuit of gain "is the natural and normal economic motive of mankind." And "it is by enlightening men all round to the end of enabling them to choose the best course for all, and to discriminate between the orders of gain that economic life is to be raised.

As for Malthus his thesis is still to be reckoned with. To men who have never read his great work, Malthus has become just a name for an absurd theory. We say "Malthusian," and laugh! Malthus, in modern discussion, is the great man of straw. But Malthus was a man of genius, and the many alleged refutations of his ideas form a collection of fallacies that would afford excellent practice for a college class in logic.

What, asks Mr. Robertson, has the historical or sociological school of economists accomplished? If you go to Thorold Rogers, you will find, he answers, slovenly method and false facts. Rogers affirms that in the Plantagenet period England was "the only wool-producing country in Europe." Spain and Portugal, Mr. Robertson contradicts, were exporting wool all the time; and the author goes on to quote Villari as stating that in 1338 Florence, having coarse wool of her own, was importing fine wools "from Tunis, Barbary, Spain, Portugal, Flanders, and *lastly even from England.*" Rogers, the champion of inductive method, furthermore reaches this false conclusion through a spurious *deduction*! Cunningham does better. He often, though not always, corrects Rogers; but you will find in him surprisingly little that is helpful in the discussion of modern problems, and, on the whole, surprisingly little thought of any kind.

The whole method of the historic and sociological school is, in short, wrong. Let economics contribute what it can to history and to sociology (if there is such a thing); but beware of imposing the methods of history, or of sociology, upon economics. To do so is to make of economists only "a superior sort of quacks."

To modern problems Mr. Robertson applies his Ricardian and common sense view with energy and with acuteness. He does not stop with Ricardi, it should be said, but goes on to handle special cases in his own way—in the practical and reasonably argumentative way, that is, which must always be the way of the politician in any but an expert-ridden nation.

Always he sticks to his conception of "average tendencies" and "the economic man." Education *pays*. "It *pays* the manufacturer, when he introduces new machinery, to provide that labor shall not bear the whole burden of the transition stage." Again, "commercial warfare demonstrably *does not pay.*"

Some of this reasoning seems obvious enough; but obviousness is not the general characteristic of Mr. Robertson's book. The

author can hardly be called a "simplicist." His analysis of the effects of great private fortunes, his discussion of production as opposed to distribution, his proposal for a tax upon all capital as distinct from a mere tax upon land—all these are deft, subtle and clear expositions, denoting not merely Ricardian orthodoxy but grasp of the particular problems and acuteness in applying principle to cases—an ability none too common in a predominantly inductive world.

Mr. Robertson fairly wins the distinction of having written one of the very few really entertaining works on political economy in existence. His defense of reason against the pedantries of the mere researchers will win the sympathy of most readers, and his bold, controversial handling of the population question first posed by Malthus will warm the hearts of a considerable body of advanced thinkers.

THE RULE OF MIGHT. By J. A. Cramb. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1918.

Although J. A. Cramb's romance of Napoleon deals with but three days of Napoleon's life, it has anything but the directness and concentration that one would expect in the story of a single episode. *The Rule of Might* exhibits, in fact, the almost inevitable defects of a full-dress historical novel. The frequent parentheses of explanation or comment, the multiplication of details in description, the crowding of the stage with conspicuous figures, the painstaking effort to convey the social atmosphere of the time (even to boudoir scenes), the over-elaboration of passions—all tend to make the story stiff and the characters puppet-like.

Parts of the novel are, indeed, as stiff, as conventional in design, and moreover as brilliant, as a piece of brocade. Despite faults, however, the story holds one's interest. The means by which it does this reveals the secret at once of its strength and of its weakness much better than could any analysis of its structure.

In a word, *The Rule of Might* is overcharged with emotion. In this respect it doubtless reflects the temper of the time (1809) and of the country (Austria) in an hour of humiliation. But the over-emotionalism is none the less a defect: it is a haze which prevents one from really seeing anything. Moreover, the author seems to identify himself with the feeling of the story, as who should say, "*This* is life at its most intense. *Here* is the tragedy of human life."

Thus, Mr. Cramb invests with a kind of splendor, as of intellectual heroism, the madly romantic and suicidal theory of the universe set forth by the poet Rentzdorf, who, rather than Napoleon or Napoleon's would-be-assassin, Friedrich Staps, is the central figure of the tale. He would have us take seriously Rentzdorf's desire to commit suicide with the woman he loved. Such impulses, no doubt, were not uncommon at the time. Lamartine, we know, was tempted in the same way. But can one to-day accept a resolution to commit suicide with one's mistress in a picturesque manner—a resolution that never quite got beyond the stage of exalted and dizzy sentiment—as anything but ludicrous in respect of real tragedy?